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Preached Decemb. 19th 1675. at

BOW-CHURCH,
BEFORE THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
LORD MAYOR and ALDERMEN
OF THE
City of London.

BY

J O H N C O O K, M. A. Rector of
Cuckstone in K E N T.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *H. Cruttenden*, and are to be sold by *Moses Pitt*,
at the *Angel* against the little North-door of
St. Paul's Church. 1676.

Sheldon MAYOR.

*Martis 1^{mo} die Februarij 1675, Anno-
que Regni Caroli Secundi Angl. &c.
xxviii^{vo}*

It is Ordered by this Court, That
Mr. *Cook* be desired to Print his
Sermon lately preached before
the Lord Mayor and Aldermen
at Bow-Church.

Wagstaffe.

41.
4. 27.
134.

Imprimatur *Concio hac in Joh. 8. v. 34.
cum Epistola dedicatoria præfixa.*

Gulielmus Jane Reverendo in Christo Pa-
tri ac Domino D^{no} Henrico Episcopo
Lond. a sacris Domesticis,

Mar. 25. 1676.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE

Sr. Joseph Sheldon

Lord Mayor of L O N D O N, and the
Court of Aldermen.

Right Honorable,

IF I could any ways perswade my self that the publishing of this Discourse would bring in any the least relief to the languishing state of Religious Practice, by raising a greater odium upon sin, or inciting us to a more united resistance against its prevailing dominion; my Christian Principles would never suffer me to withhold it from the publick: But since so many pieces of the like nature, far better contriv'd for that purpose, have so rarely or imperceptibly produc'd such happy effects; I most humbly beg leave from your Honourable Court, to profess to the World, that I had much rather this Sermon had expir'd (the fate of many better) within the compass of that hour in which it was delivered, being never de-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

*sign'd, and as little deserving to be longer liv'd:
But withal, I must not forget to declare too,
that, as the order of Your Court, and so the
approbation You have honoured me with, may
very warrantably justify and secure me in a
greater adventure; So, in particular, my
Lord, the great Favours I have received from
Your Lordship, and Your most Generous and
Honorable Family, may very reasonably ob-
lige me to a chearful submission: And although I
cannot but look upon this as a very mean and
inconsiderable return of my acknowledgments,
yet I hope it may at least give some testimony
how willing and ready I am, notwithstanding
my real and just reluctancy in this case, to ma-
nifest my self,*

Right Honourable,
Your most obliged and most
humbly devoted Servant,

JOHN COOK.

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S E R M O N

Preached Decemb. 19th, 1675, at

BOW-CHURCH, &c.

Ioh. 8. Ver. 34.

Jesus answered them, Verily verily I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin.

THE Scribes and Pharisees, and indeed all the proud Sons of *Abraham* at that time, and in that degenerate estate, on all occasions vaunting of their noble descent, their clear and free extraction, thought no captivity could ever infringe that entailed freedom; although they were then under the *Roman-yoke*, besides that more grievous one of their sins: But like *Stoicks* upon the wrack, or under

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the exquisite torments of a disease, esteem'd no calamity or confinement, no external torment or slavery any abridgment of that high prerogative: Our Saviour therefore in this Chapter, and on several other occasions endeavors to possess them with a better notion of that title of the free-born Sons of *Abraham*, that their honour could not descend when there was a failure in their virtue, and in its true legitimate issue, their good works: That if they were *Abraham's* children, they would then do the works of *Abraham*; and likewise that * *God was able out of stones to raise up children to him, i. e.* according to the right of Sovereigns, to confer that dignity and honour which they by their disloyalty had forfeited upon others of any quality or extraction whatsoever, who by their merits could make a better claim: Thus enlarging and restraining their freedom, and the right of their birth, according to the

Mat. 3. 9.

different

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different proportions of their good works, or their sins; and whatever they could plead for themselves so long as they continued in the latter, they were not true sons, but *born of fornication*, and held under the greatest bondage; because he that committeth sin, *whosoever he be, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free*, as to all other relations, is as to that the servant of sin. The truth of which assertion in the fullest latitude, as also the means of extricating our selves out of this slavery, may be comprehended under these three general heads.

1. Barely the proposition it self, how he that committeth sin, is the servant of sin.

2. To extend the slavery further than what is properly called the commission of sin, but rather is the omission of a duty; how he that any ways complieth with anothers sin, is likewise signally the servant, if not of his own, yet of that others sin; which compliance

is to be understood two ways, either positively, when out of a slavish conformity we go some share with others in the actual commission of sin; or negatively, when out of a like slavish fear we do not reprove and reprehend the sins of others, as is universally the duty of all men.

3. The nature of Christian freedom, and by what means we are to disengage our selves from the bondage of sin.

1. He that committeth sin, is the servant of sin. And of this servitude we are the more insensible, because we never experienc'd a freedom, being born in sin, and so consequently in slavery, [*οὗτοι δούλοι*] servants by nature, our native corruption *gendring unto bondage*; and still as we grow up in years, when all other slaves in length of time may expect a manumission, the number of our taskmasters is encreased, and our lusts become the more froward and imperious, and require more diligent and

constant observance ; so severe and tyrannical in their injunctions, that to please or court them, is, with the *Patriarch* towards his humorfome and unreasonable * Father-in-law, to double the time of our bondage : No obedience or conformity can oblige them to a fuspence of their penalties, till at last they are grown up into a body of sin, even into constitution and complexion; and then to disobey must be thought an offence to nature : They are form'd into a law warring against the law of our minds, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members; and when thus its usurpation by continuance is grown into a right, it becomes a seemingly legal tyranny, makes us do that which we allow not, and to neglect that which we would do, according to the Apostles sensible complaint of its prevailing oppression : It abrogates the law of God which was written in our minds, disguises the objects of good and evil, and makes

* Gen. 29.
27.

Rom. 7.

Lex peccati est violentia consuetudinis. St. Augustin.

makes the latter by the enslaving prevalence of use and custome become the most eligible : Our wills and effections easily fall in with this conquering power ; but what compleats and makes up our entire vassalage ; our reason and judgment, the only mighty powers, on our parts, that are most able to resist the enemy , and maintain our own rights, are brought to accept the conditions of a base submission, are corrupted and carried away by every petty prejudice ; and at last our very conscience (the only friend left to God and Religion) that should check, moderate, and superintend all our faculties, is blinded, or brib'd to a connivance.

Satan too (besides these powerful enemies within our own borders, even in our own bosoms) comes in for homage, and though the kingdom of darkness in its magnificent pomp and splendour he cannot keep us as of old ; though our God and blessed Saviour

has excluded his power out of many Dominions, and reassum'd the exercise of it to himself, (which was his own from the beginning of the World, by the right of Creation;) yet still this mighty Prince of Darkness, upon his former usurpation, pretends and endeavors to super-induce a Papal Supremacy; which, by his subtil Agents, he vigorously carries on with all manner of tyranny and oppression.

All the severe effects of an enslaving and domineering power are still visible among us; he lays a tax and imposition upon every sin; yet not only increases his treasure, (and so advances his interest and power,) but also the number of his loyal subjects; and beyond the success of all other Tyrants, is not by these cruelties fear'd and hated, but fear'd and ador'd; and his commands faithfully observ'd, though he himself punishes the obedient in the very act of their submission: Nay, so
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fortunate is his usurpation, that though he has annext a capital punishment to the performance of some of his commands, and perpetual imprisonment to others, *i. e.* often-times an immediate death the consequence of some, or a lingring, but tormenting disease and indisposition, the consequence of most debaucheries; yet he wants not a constant succession of Profelytes and Martyrs, who are so devoted to his service, that they voluntarily come in, *and bind themselves with cords, as sacrifices unto the horns of his Altars*; or like that imprudent *Sampson*, suffer themselves to be fool'd into bondage by every wanton lust.

I say, though since the coming of Christ, the Church and worship of Satan be not so visible and pompous, and so our subjection and slavery in this case not so perceptible; yet humane sacrifices never fell more frequently in his Temples, than now in his more private

vate Conventicles ; the infamous houses of debauchery, as well those of the licentious intemperate, as the lascivious wanton. Those ancient Pagan Zealots that would usually offer up their lives, but more commonly cut and flash their bodies, to signalize themselves in his service, could not give a better testimony of their devotion and entire vassalage, than they that now every day hazard their lives upon the like desperate duty, or venture the loss of the best ornament in their faces ; a more signal mark indeed for such slaves, than the *boring of their ears*, the Levitical token of perpetual bondage.

If we trace every sin in all its severe injunctions and imperious dictates, we shall easily discover, that no insulting power could ever be so insupportable, that none but *the Fool that hastneth to the correction of the stocks*, would ever engage himself in the service of sin. And to

instance but in some of our grievances ;

Who is he that hath a mind to be free, that would dance attendance upon all the suggestions of malice? which in its own black thoughts creates, and raises enemies, and then stands Centinel in all the avenues of spleen and revenge, to conquer them; wracks the man with jealousies and surmises, to take every one for an enemy, and distrust every action for a cheat and imposition; puts him upon all the base and ungenerous employments, to satisfy an unreasonable and impatient jealousy; sends him as a spy into every dark corner, to discover that which only dwells in his own imaginations. When the virtues of his supposed enemy shall cast him down, and make him miserable, or put him upon all the slavish disquietudes of hatred and detraction: When his good fortunes, though visibly proceeding from the over-ruling

providence of God, shall so afflict and torment him, as to make him unthankful to the same providence for his own.

Nay so desperate is the state of his slavery, that a reconciliation with himself, or indeed the whole World under the dominion of this sin is impossible; when after all, the calamitous fall of his enemy, cannot crown him with so much conquest as to give his malice the least respite, or himself the shortest intervals of content and satisfaction; but he must be still (until his jealousy has found out new enemies to exercise it self upon) as solicitous to keep the world from pitying his condition, and must maintain the justice of his fall with the same disquietude he ever wish'd or procur'd it.

And at last perhaps all this while he has been but fighting with his own dismal Ghost, and has had no other enemy than his own temper, thus imposing upon himself Egyptian Bondage, to la-

bour and turmoil without materials to work upon.

Ambitious Pride, an usual concomitant with this sin, is altogether as hard a Master, and raises as many distracting troubles and sorrows even in its ascending, and at its height, as it ever can do in its fall and degradation: For can we imagin any slavery more pressing and burdensome, than that most difficult task and obligation that is constantly incumbent upon the man of reputation, of cherishing and keeping up his esteem and interest (so apt to fail and languish) in the breasts of several distinct and humorsome parties: Or, on the other hand, can we imagin any fear more servile and vexatious, than that which daily and unavoidably must oppress his spirits; lest some unfortunate or imprudent, though perhaps really not evil circumstance of his life; nay least some conscientious or really good, but only impolitick or ill-tim'd action may

unhappily dash in pieces all that reputation he has been *long, laborious, and sinful* in the raising : So that the whole man lives but in perpetual vassalage to his own ambition, or after the manner of a *Roman triumph*, is carried but as a captive only in the same *triumphal Chariot* with his own insulting honour.

Who would be bound to follow the worldling through the whole drudgery of his life, that hates fetters or a dungeon? Who is so fast hamper'd in the affairs of the World, that though every day his designs and ends are plentifully atchiev'd, yet will not be at the charge to purchase his own freedom, or enjoy the product and indeed the proper end of his own solicitous cares; perfectly sold under sin, not an hir'd servant, but left wholly to the mercy of his most cruel Avarice ; so hard-hearted and tyrannical to his own wearied and tired lusts; that he will not so much as permit them the least enjoyment

joyment of that in the purchase of which they have spent and wasted themselves, but unreasonably denies them the *wages of their own sin* ; so that all manner of success in the compassing of his designs is so far from putting an end to his slavery, that it is rather but an earnest and contract to bind ~~them~~ over to further bondage, and greater hardship : And these necessary effects of servitude we cannot imagin should ever fail to attend one that is in a constant and uneasy pursuit of gain, a toilsome and vexatious travel, but never fully, *i. e.* to his own content or satisfaction, to the fixing and quieting of his desires, accomplishes his designs, or arrives at the end of his journey.

But if the slavery be so great under the dominion of one single sin, what will become of the poor mortal that has engag'd himself in allegiance to more, and to those too that run coun-

ter in their commands: How miserably must he be hal'd and dragg'd between different tormenters, equally devoted to each in all manner of love and affection, but each rigorously requiring entire vassalage, and hardly admitting any competition.

Avarice often-times gets the first possession of the man, and thence challenges the supreme right, and requires that all things should be subservient to its designs: But then his ambition, and the vain esteem of the world, to gratify some haughty humour, or vindicate a poor, but lost reputation, has so prevailing a power, that in compliance with these, though not without great offence to the former, he thinks himself equally bound to appear sometimes, and in some things, as vainly profuse, licentious and prodigal; as at other times, and in other things, covetous and fordid. Nay further yet, in opposition to both, (as easy observation will

will furnish us with instances,) if some extravagant but imperious lust, though never so chargable or inglorious, shall but raign in his mortal body, neither his honour nor his purse shall ever be able to intercept or retard his ready submission, and most impetuous obedience.

Thus, though *God and Mammon* cannot be serv'd, yet so tractible and officious is man to all manner of sin, that he can easily temporize with two opposite vices, and oft with a third; or with more, as irreconcilable to both: A sign, that though some sins for a while suspend the execution of their power, it is but to give way to greater tyranny. And though this great and mighty Kingdom of Darknes be divided into the lesser principalities and powers of the air, that thus clash and run counter in their commands, (which one would think should weaken or destroy their authority and strength,) yet still

flourishes, and grows greater by divisions, because they peaceably combine, notwithstanding their oppositions to enslave the man, and only admit him the variety of different tortures.

But not only in these greater evils, but also in those of lesser note is this rigour and severity easily visible: Nay, what is most strange, our captivity is the greater too under the dominion of lesser sins, as common observation will soon inform us how that those more heinous villainies; those crying sins such as murder, treason, parricide, rapine, sins against nature, and the like, do not only more rarely occur in the common practice of mankind, but likewise all temptation, and our own propensity to such is less powerfull and pressing, and therefore hence our slavery less to be fear'd, or more easily prevented: whereas those more ordinary sins, of a lower rank, (such as more usually grow into habit and

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custome)

custome) as wandering thoughts, inordinate desires, idle words, intemperate anger and desire of revenge, immoderate love of the world, vain-glory, and the like, are such as can turn and wind us every way, and lead captive silly mortals into all manner of servitude. Every petty lust will be humour'd, and expects attendance, and to live in subjection to the less, is but the meaner slavery. Nor does any quality, relation or circumstances whatsoever exempt the offender, but all are equally subjects, *for whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin*, cannot be excus'd from the drudgery and servile offices, but must submit to its rigorous and most impartial discipline. But because the slavery extendeth further than the actual guilt or direct commission of sin, and is often extorted by an external power *i. e.* by anothers sin, we are to consider under the.

2d. Proposition, how, that he that

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any way complieth with anothers sin, is likewise signally the servant of sin: And that, whether positively, in bearing some part with others in the commission of sin; or negatively, by neglecting the indispensable duty of reprehension.

Compliance with other mens sins, (usually grounded upon a pretended civility, or a slavish awe to the person or party offending,) as we thus distinguish it from actual commission, must most properly belong to those whose consciences and principles we are to suppose so far sufficiently rectified and sound, as to influence them with an abhorrence and detestation of the same vices, as to their own peculiar practice; but yet are so cold and unconcern'd in the general cause of God, as not at all to move with any zeal in its promotion, but only within the narrow circle of their own actions; and so they are not solicitous that God is

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dishonoured or provok'd, so long as the guilt lies not directly at their own doors; nor so charitable to their neighbours, as with any trouble to endeavor the prevention of their damnation, so long as they can possibly hope it will not include their own. A sort of servile and selfish Religion, meaner than the slavery of sin it self; for if he that committeth sin be the servant of sin, then he that complieth with such offenders, can be but the servant of servants, in a much lower station: And certainly this is most directly servitude, not figuratively, but rather more strictly and properly so than the former, when a man shall be afraid, by a moderate and friendly check or reproof, even to seem to discountenance that in another, which he hates in himself.

But since then the honour of God be the greatest end, or as great as any of our Religion, and after that our own peculiar everlasting interest of salva-

salvation ; then that God be honour'd by others as well as by our selves, ought so far to be equally our concern ; because that honour we are tender of, and is the chief object of our religious fear, we must necessarily be as careful that others do not derogate from it; for any violation of it whatsoever, must be our trouble and grievance from whomsoever it proceedeth ; otherwise we cannot be supposed to have any real honour or reverence for him our selves. For if that man, that can silently and without concern suffer the reputation of his friend, by all manner of scandalous detraction, to be unworthily bore down and trampled upon, be justly accounted as far distant from real friendship as the reviler himself ; a far more base and ungenerous hypocrite must he be, and more odious in the sight of God, that, though he dares not himself, yet can patiently hear another blaspheme that Majesty, which he pretends

* 1 Cor. 10.
24. c. 13. 5.
Phil. 2. 4.
Rom. 9. 3.

pretends to adore. If, agen on the other side, charity to our* neighbours, but more eminently in matters of their eternal welfare, be an indispenfible duty; then nothing that might any way fecure the honour of God, prevent their fin, or restrain them in the commiffion, can without an equal guilt, as to thefe confiderations, be omitted. And now, becaufe a prudent reprehention and reproof of fin abetted by a religious practice, is moft univerfally within the power of thofe we have already fupposed to be abftemious from fuch vices themfelves: It is then a neceffary duty, not confin'd to thofe of the Ministerial Function, who muft needs want the frequent and requifite opportunities, but indispenfibly incumbent upon all men, and upon all occafions and emergencies of evil, as well in common converfe and companies, and among equals, as toward fuperiors and inferiors, thus far with pru-

dence * and a due moderation, in the behalf of God's honour, and in order to the reformation of such offenders, to declare by a severe reprehension, or some other friendly way, their dislike of all irreligious principles, expressions and practices whatsoever. The omission of which duty can be no less than a compliance, and if so, then a slavery little less than subjection to the same sins: For no mans conscience that is so well guided as severely to reflect upon his own vices, but would likewise upon all the same religious motives, that are not purely selfish, reprehend anothers; were it not aw'd and cramp'd by some slavish fears, and carnal ends.

* For St. Chrysostom observes; *ἵνα γὰρ ἰκανὸν ἀντιρροῦνται βλαδὴ αἱ ἀναληστικαὶ ἐπιτίμαι*; Too unseasonable or importunate reproof is apt to make the sinner first shameless, and then obdurate.

Dum non sic oburgentur quasi oportet.

Easy observation will make good, that the neglect of this duty hath caused the greatest degeneracy in Christianity, and made Religion esteemed the most inconsiderable part and end of

our life: That general remifness there
 vifibly is in piety, is chiefly or wholly
 to be attributed to this fort of flavish
 compliance, which even conscientious
 men are too apt to admit of, in rela-
 tion to other mens vices, by which they
 receive a current ftamp and approba-
 tion, whilst a prudent reproof would
 certainly work a fhame, if not a con-
 viction in the finner. And this is ufu-
 ally warranted upon the pretended ci-
 vility of the age, and freedom of con-
 verfation, which allows every man an
 uncontrollable priviledg of living his
 own life, and then it muft be no lefs
 than rudeness and impertinence to in-
 troduce any religious cautions: Indif-
 ferency here makes the beft company,
 and any reluctant diflike of fin fpoils
 and difturbs it, and fo Chrift himfelf
 muft now be excluded as an unfit com-
 panion for *Publicans and finners*; all con-
 cern for his honour muft out of civi-
 lity be difclaim'd even by his own fol-
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lowers, because *to the Jew he is a stumbling block, and to the *Gentile foolishness.* As *Greek Philosopher. the transcendent graces and gifts of his Holy Spirit, the only characters he has left to dignifie his followers above the rank of honest heathens, are already brought down to the level of moral virtues, so those Gospel duties, those severe injunctions of zealous, unfeigned and incessant piety (such as the fears of death it self could never yet dispence with) must be restrain'd and limited by the rules of a pretendly civil, *i. e.* a licentious conversation: and as again they would have him wait for a civill sanction to procure his admittance in a Kindom, and to give authority to his laws, and likewise submit to the same power as oft as it shall command his departure and banishment, or repeal those obligations: So in these lower Societies of men, must he stand to the same laws, nay, oftentimes more rigorously dealt with: he

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must

must have the concurring votes of the whole company, before he can be admitted as a seasonable subject of discourse, or his honour thought to deserve their concern, no one must be displeas'd or disoblig'd at his admission, every debaucht miscreant has his negative voice, and so throws him out, and awes the rest with his furious and boisterous : vices ; thus far has this endeeering and obliging humour prevail'd, that men are affraid to stand up in the cause of God, least they should affront his enemies, but must live in constant rebellion to their own consciences on the petty obligations of *civility and manners* falsely so call'd, whereas, according to the rules of good manners, that is certainly the highest rudeness to dare to appear irreligious in the sight of them, that have by a solemn and sacred vow engag'd themselves in contrary profession.

The Atheist indeed has been more

frequently hift out of company as an unfociable creature for fuch noble rational beings, and therefore not fo much perhaps for his irreligious principles, as, his oppositions to reason in which every pretender to difcourfe, that he may be accounted rational (the new fafhion pride of our age) thinks himfelf in honour concern'd to appear in its vindication, though it be too in the defence of God himfelf : Why the practical Atheift, or that fool that certainly *fays in his heart there is no God*, drawing up the fame conclufion in his diffolute converfation, fhould find a kinder reception, is wholly to be imputed to the flavifh cowardice of fuch complying Chriftians, who evidently declare themfelves a fham'd to *confefs Chrift before men*, and thofe too that are the vileft and moft inconfiderable.

What is more common then a thundering fhower of oaths and blafphemies,

open and impudent profession of irreligion, a vain-glorious boast of all manner of impieties vented with pleasure and triumph; which may perhaps startle and amaze those that profess a detestation of them, but yet withal shall silence them, and stop their mouths, not able to rouse their zeal, or extort a word in the defence of the Divine Majesty of Heaven thus insulted over by the works of his own hands? but we must know that in civil matters to be *conscious* to, to *conceal*, or not to *declare* against treasonable practices, includes an equal guilt, and is obnoxious to the same punishment with the actual offence; and surely in our case too, he that does not reprehend, is little less than a cringing assistant to anothers debaucheries.

Every ungodly and blasphemous wretch then, whilst he dare venture to appear so before us, puts us upon the test, charges us upon the Articles of

our Creed, does in effect ask us the question what we dare do, or say, for that God and Saviour that he dare thus blaspheme : And many blessed Martyrs lost their lives upon less provocation to stand up and appear in his cause, than what is daily given to Christians even in common converse in the World ; and who run no greater a hazard than the present displeasure of a petulant sinner, and perhaps after purchase his reverence : Those that delivered up their sacred Books to the flames, or started back in the times of persecution, had some principles of nature to extenuate their compliance, (though Christian motives ought to have been far more prevalent ;) but for a Christian now to dissemble his profession, to shrink under the impieties of his own companion, and suffer the whole Christian cause to be trampled upon without the least reproof or appearance of dislike ; is a cowardice so great

great and slavish, that argues him ready to submit his Religion not only to any prevailing power, but throw it under the feet of every domineering sinner, who alas is himself but the servant of his own vices : Thus that faint-hearted Disciple St. *Peter* was out-dar'd, and even frightened out of his profession, not by the more potent and furious persecuters of his Master, for against them he stoutly *drew his Sword*, but afterwards by one of the meanest slaves and servants about them.

But to extend further yet both the guilt and slavery of this sin, let us consider how from the *same spirit of bondage inclining us to fear*, men are apt sometimes to descend to meaner servitude, and deeper guilt, and beyond a bare compliance with other sins, to go a share in the commission themselves ; to suppress their own virtues, strangle the suggestions of a good conscience, and stifle all their good inclinations, least

they might be offensive and distastful to those whose servants they are: To commute the performance of what they are fully convinc'd, is most virtuous, honest, and their direct duty. For that which is popular, vain-glorious, and sometimes impious, and all in complacence perhaps to a party, a faction, and sometimes in obedience to the murmurs of the common multitude, the Rabble, that petty Jury that too often checks and limits Justice. Thus Herod to be civil to the company, *not only for his Oath's sake, but for the sake of them too that sate with him at meat*, (as the Text phrases it) commanded no less than the head of *John the Baptist* to be cut off, and delivered up to his wanton *Petitioner*, though before he had highly approv'd, and was *even delighted* with his Doctrine and conversation: And thus *agen Pontius Pilate*, in direct opposition to his reason and conscience, besides other *startling intimations*, but in compliance with

Mat. 14.

Mat. 6. 2.

Mat. 27.

with the cursed rout was frightened into the permission of the most execrable villany, and rather than endure their clamors (a mean suffering in the cause of Christ) delivered up the Lord of Life to be made a *sacrifice*, not to appease the wrath of God for his sins, but that of the multitude which he more dreaded.

And thus the *Forerunner*, thus the *Author and finisher of our Salvation*, the highest patterns of innocence that ever appear'd among mankind, and esteem'd no less even by their own Judges, were hurried out of the World, in order to the Redemption of which they were purposely sent, and all in complacence and compliment to a cursed company, and a furious multitude: And thus they stand as signal instances of the unparallell'd mischiefs of this slavish compliance, which since deals no better with Christianity it self, when ever it is untractable and reluctant to

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the popular designs of civility and obligation, or to the keeping up of a petty interest and name in the World.

Such are the advantages of vice, that it has not only those powerful Advocates, the Flesh, the World, and the Devil to solicit and carry on its cause and interest, but the patronage and protection too of all those Devoto's that have once engag'd themselves in its service.

For sin, where-ever it reigns, assumes all the power, priviledges, and prerogatives of the man it possesses, and with as prevailing influence, and as great authority, puts them in execution over all below him: All his retainers are its servicable attendants, and as many as do homage to his person, pay at least a passive obedience to his venerable vices; may further, rather than be discarded from his favour, will venture with that obliging Syrian Courtier, ^{2 King. 3. 18.} but unsound Profelyte, to make their

their obeisance to their Masters Idol.

Let us then arm our selves against this powerful enemy of our souls, first suppress him within our own bosoms, and then lay siege against him, in whatsoever *habitations* and *stronger holds* of greatness or honour he has fortified himself: No mans priviledges can set up a *legal Sanctuary* for sin, no mans actions exempted from the jurisdiction of a prudent reproof: Some persons indeed, as well as to all liberty in their morals, as to the uncontrollable exercise of their authority, are fix'd beyond the limits of all humane-coercive-power, but none were ever yet look'd upon as seated beyond the reach of a futable, well-tim'd, and careful reprehension: Suppose the sinner be great and honourable, it is then our secular interest and concern, as well as our Christian duty, to endeavour his reformation; since God's judgments, the never-failing consequents of such

mens sins, seldom fall down upon the head of the offender alone, but are usually dilated as far as the influence of his power, and so the approbation of his sin did reach before: Such is the power of sinners, not only to enslave and awe us, but to make us miserable, even the objects of Divine vengeance, if we look not to our selves, and vindicate our own rights: We are then to look upon them as our worst enemies, as plotters and contrivers of publick ruine, nay little less than Rebels against the State; at least guilty of a *constructive treason*, i. e. of such enormities that commonly undermine and ruine a whole Kingdom: For being always either great in number or power, the justice of God does usually so far bear a proportion, as to cause his judgments likewise to be great and signal; but yet his justice being infinite too, will not be so confin'd as to single out the offenders alone, but for their sins

executes vengeance upon whole Nations. Cities, Families, or any Societies consisting of innocent as well as offending Members: And one of the greatest Salvo's for this particular and seemingly irregular instances of Divine Providence proposed by *S. Aug. de Civ. Dei*, upon that question, *Why, in common calamities, the good do bear a part as well as the evil, is, because good men, by neglecting to reprove the errors of their offending brethren, do by that silence and connivance, in some sort, comply with their sins, transfer a part of the guilt to themselves, and so consequently an obligation to the same punishment.* It was an extraordinary and miraculous favour that *Lot* and his Family were handed out of *Sodom* by the conduct of *Angels*; and no doubt too but both he and *Abraham* had by reprehension, and all other possible means, endeavoured to reduce *those sons of Be-lial* to the knowledg of God, and therefore were deservedly exempted: But in the ordinary dispensations of providence

dence we find by woeful experience, that the righteous are without distinction involv'd in general punishments with the wicked provokers themselves, and reasonable enough for such base compliance. Nay further yet how far our eternal interest may be concern'd, will be too great a presumption, not seriously to consider : for though every man must stand and fall to his own conscience, and no excuse shall exempt him from judgment, yet another may so far be concern'd, if not to alleviate the sinners guilt, yet to enhance his own : for it is the highest charity (and that duty the sum of Christianity) to endeavour by all possible means the Redemption of our captive brethren, and what though they seem reluctant and froward, yet we must not desist : it is not the man but the sin within him that refuses our assistance ; Those that were possessed with Devils gave our Saviour but hard

hard language whilst he design'd their deliverance and cure, but when they were dispossess'd and rid of such troublesome and unruly inhabitants, they presently ador'd him: Though the *scorner hateth reproof*, yet he hath a conscience within him that fideth and taketh part with the reprover: And who is that man that dare look him in the face with contempt or dishonour, that lays his bosom sins open before him? We are to look upon sinners as distemper'd persons, decay'd or prejudic'd in their understandings, and so, insensible of their condition: They are full of sores and wounds, and so dread to be touch'd or search'd; but though they do not invite, yet their misery commands our charity, and to disregard them, will be but such another kindness that the *Priest and Levite* in the Gospel shewed to their distressed Countryman *that fell among thieves, wounded, strip'd, and left half-dead*, they even pass him by,

as loath perhaps to meddle in such dangerous cases, to disturb his groans and put him to more pain, which could not be avoided in the cure of such desperate wounds.

This is the *Doctrine and practice of Christ and his Apostles*, the greatest examples of meekness and self-denial, and who patiently suffer'd under all other enemies but sin and Satan: And this office they manifestly exercis'd, not only by the right of their *Ministerial Function*, and so confin'd it to the places and times more especially set apart for the instruction of the people, and the reprehension of sin; but likewise in their common and accidental converse and abode amongst men. They consulted not their interest or quiet, when they met with sinners, nor did they fear their hatred or revenge, made it not only their business to enquire into the sins of the age, and the peculiar ones of every Nation they had to do with, but as constantly upon all occasions

occasions did they severely rebuke any irregular principles, positions, or practices they could observe in single offenders, with courage and innocence they ran amongst the guilty; and our Lord himself dealt no gentler with the great and mighty sinners the Scribes and Pharisees, as oft as they came in his way, than with the buyers and sellers that profan'd the Temple; but with satyrical, that is, the natural language of zeal and a good conscience laid open to their faces, and unravell'd all their policies, cheats, hypocrisies, impositions, pious frauds, and vain traditions, with many repeated notes and denunciations of God's immediate judgments against them; as is eminently to be seen in that 23^d Chap. of St. Mat. which the Holy Ghost hath penn'd in a stile as sharp and severe as ever that provoking subject could require. Indeed the very design of his coming was not to send peace on the earth, but a sword, to set us at variance against sin and

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sinners, to arm us against these venomous creatures; and will we then admit them, and cherish them in our very bosoms? Is this the fulfilling of the Prophecy, *that the Wolf shall thus dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard lie down with the Kid?* Must Christian innocence never yet danted or disheartned by all the cruelties its Pagan enemies could devise, now meanly consult its ease, and submit to the foes of its own household? Must it keep correspondence with sin, and make a covenant with Satan; careful not to bruise his head, lest he should bruise her heel? The cause of Christ can never receive a more fatal blow than by this universal toleration; Christian courage will soon languish and degenerate upon such a cessation of arms: Nay hell and death will soon resume their former seats, from whence they were dejected by the Kingdom of Christ, if we so tamely give up the victory purchas'd to our hands: Our subjection will every day grow greater,

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Isa. 11. 6.

Mat. 12. 43.
 &c.

and the *unclean Spirit* finding such civil and neighbourly entertainment among us, will take with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and so the state of the possessed shall become much worse than the former, and our bondage too irrecoverable, unless with greater zeal and courage we endeavor to retrieve our liberty, and renew our ancient Charter, which in the next place is to be enquir'd into, viz.

3. The state of our *Christian freedom*, and how we are disengag'd from the slavery of sin.

The expedient is easy and plainly set down in the context, as well the *Author* and *Origine*, as the nature and manner of our freedom. v. 36. *If the Son therefore who abideth in the house for ever shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed: And to be made capable of this great priviledg, is, by a constant adhering to the truth, that truth and grace that came by the same Jesus Christ, who, (abiding in the house for ever) being Lord and Heir of all those immunities*

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the Jews laid claim to from *Abraham*, and confin'd to the natural seed) has the sole right of conferring this liberty upon us : And that upon these terms, *ver. 32. and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* Truth indeed, in all the acceptions of the word, is the perfect freedom of humane nature, and all deviation and digression from it, whether in knowledg or practice, is confinement and slavery, a restraint laid upon our faculties, and an intrenchment upon *Christian priviledg.*

In the more general and Scripture use of the Word, as it denotes *that Gospel of peace and truth, those glad-tidings of Salvation that came by Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life, & so is the object of our faith.* The Gentiles were not only in bondage to their own lusts, being servants unto uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity, but likewise under the more immediate government and polity of *Satan*, which we cannot but conceive to be a state of

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the greatest thralldom : These by the Gospel of truth, were brought out of darkness into most marvellous light, and delivered from the power of Satan unto God : The Jews were as strictly held under the rigorous discipline of their law, *called the law of works, and those frequently the works of the flesh,* because chiefly consisting in outward performances, and distinct from Evangelical works done by grace : From this legal servitude the Gospel of truth was design'd to them as *a law of liberty*, of more gentle dispensations ; not of *libertinism*, according to the erroneous inferences of some *hereticks* in the earliest times of the Church, by which they pleaded a freedom from *moral obligations*, as they are noted by Ignatius in his *Epistle* to that Church of *Smyrna*, who accuses them as ἐσποδοῦντες οἱς ἡμεῖς ἰνοῦντες Χριστὸν of false opinions concerning the Grace of Christ, and that because *περὶ ἀγάπης ὡς καὶ ἀποστόλων* &c. they wholly disregarded *charity and good works*, a catalogue of which immediately fol-

Gal. 3. 3.
Phil. 3. 3.
4. &c.

lows; esteeming it a slavery inconsistent with the *free grace of Christ, bonis & honestis operibus vacare*, say the *Centurists* out of Cent. l. 2. c. 5. *Irenæus* and *Theodoret*, concerning the same *hereticks*. For though the *works of the law* are excluded by the coming of *faith*, according to the *Doctrine of St. Paul*, yet according to the same *Apostle*, *Charity, per quam fides operatur*, certainly no contemplative, but a practical duty, dilated into all manner of religious actions, is advanc'd above all, even the *miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit*, *1 Cor. 13.* and though *Rom. 3.* he enlarges altogether upon the *faith of Abraham*, without expressly allowing any share to his works in the act of *justification*; yet if under that *faith* he does not include his works, and imply an indispensable obligation to the same, he evidently thwarts the *Doctrine of our Saviour*, in the *Cap. of my Text*, who altogether recommends to his followers the *works of Abraham*, without any mention of his *faith*,

faith, as the truest Character of the children of that faithful Patriarch; besides the notorious opposition to St. James, who wrote by the dictates of the same spirit, and according to the judgment of St. Augustin purposely directed his Epistle against the fore-mentioned errors (probably raised by mistaking St. Paul's sense) to maintain the necessity of good works and the insignificancy of faith without them; attributing justification to works in the same words and phrase that the other Apostle doth to faith, as they are indeed both, either instrumentally or conditionally so necessary to justification (of which God himself, through the merits of Christ Jesus, is the Efficient cause) that it may properly and indifferently be attributed to each, so neither be excluded: In general all over the N. T. we may easily discover that the injunctions to believe and to live according to the dictates of that sound faith are inseparable, how else can we yield our members servants to righteousness unto ho-

Aug. de
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holiness, unless in actual submission to his precepts, or a fixed resolution and readiness (such as was Abraham's to offer up his Son) we obey him whose servants we are, which service is that perfect freedom, the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

2. In a more restrain'd acception of the Word, as *truth* bears a relation to *knowledg*, *ye shall know the truth*, &c. as it is the object of our understanding and judgment, and so is opposed to error and falshood, it is likewise the great freedom of humane nature: It entertains no prejudices to disturb its quiet, is aw'd by no party, faction, or interest; enslav'd by no erroneous principle or position; loys to lie under an obligation of wresting all things to confirm a falshood, notoriously, the pitiful and slavish shifts of all the Doctors of error, the maintainers of *heresy and schism*, who in all their writings evidently betray themselves to be but *servants* to those *hypotheses*, which they have factiously, malici-

maliciously, or vain-gloriously undertaken: It will no ways be wedded to a common error with the multitude out of *popularity*, nor will it chuse out the more intricate and abstruse paths of falshood out of *singularity*; but leads its followers the right way to *Divine knowledg* by the rule of a *good Conscience*, and the *conduct* of the *H. Spirit*, according to the profession of that great *Master of true knowledg*, Rom. 9. 1. *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my Conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.*

3, *Truth in its moral acception*, as it signifies *sincerity and uprightness in practice*, and is the object of the will, an inviolable integrity resolutely carried on in every action and circumstance of our conversations, is the greatest *freedom* and happiness that is attainable in this life: which never is oppressed under the slavery and tortures of a disquieted conscience, because in a constant obedience to its lawful dictates, it will not
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suffer our own lusts to exalt themselves, and so involve us in all the troubles that constantly attend their satisfaction, nor will it endure the impositions and grievous burdens of others vices, nor by any *external encouragements* be brought over to their party : It never takes occasion to rouse and exercise the unquiet passions but in a good cause, and then they are not turbulent, but regular and delightful; and though it bears a constant hatred and enmity against sin, (a passion we safely attribute to the Divine nature it self,) yet it is such that proceeds not from an uneasy spleen, and an impatient spirit, but from a religious and charitable zeal, and what is sweetened by a constant conquest over it.

The religious man has but one, and that a direct way to go; more than one leads to distraction and disquietude: The honour of God, and his own salvation, one and the same end, is the full of his design: The intricacies of *policy*,
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the unquiet concerns of *interest*, the careful and solicitous ways of *keeping in with the World*, further than a Christian and universal charity, are never admitted within his breast: And yet we commonly see too, that whatsoever is the difficult, uneasy, and indeed but the rare product of all such subtil and politick contrivances, whether honour, riches, or the full enjoyment of all temporal blessings, doth oftentimes most plentifully descend upon him: So that honesty and integrity is the best *policy*, the securest and most lasting way of growing rich and honourable, though perhaps not so expeditious: And though we cannot boast of the many encouragements it meets with in the World, yet the *over-ruling providence* of God, (notwithstanding all the oppositions of men) will oft-times advance, and become a *Patron* to his own servants: But here is the greatest advantage of all, as the religious man possesseth of such blessings,

blessings, receives them without the attendant cares and troubles in the purchase; so a failure of them is no disappointment, and so no disaster or disquietude on the other hand; because he is fully satisfied that it is the will and pleasure of God, and for his own more real and lasting good, and so he is still as forward in the same direct way towards his first and chief proposed ends.

This then is that liberty and happiness which only *dwells in the habitations of the righteous*; but within the easy reach and purchase of all men: And this fully removes all objections against the seeming irregularity in God's *providence* below, where advancement and depression fall not within our own rules of proportion, nor are *regulated* according to the *methods of human justice*. Because these are things momentary and worthless, and God does not always dispence them as the tokens of his goodness;

but he has instructed us in a Religion that reduces all to a level; and notwithstanding the different disparity in our present station, we are all equally qualified (as to external advantages) to act that religious part of our life for which we were chiefly sent into the body; so that it is wholly our own faults that we are not as happy even in this World, in the chearful performance of those duties requir'd of us in order to our salvation, and in the joyful expectation and warrantable hopes of that blessed reward, as any one we are apt to envy for want of this religious temper, which is able to make any condition the best: Sin makes the inequality, and brings along with it all those uneasy strivings and envyings that disturb our enjoyment, and thus injuriously intrenches upon our liberty: Let us then proclaim war against it where-ever it presides; let us not think it *rebellion* to oppose *usurpation*,

or vainly imagin it consistent with *Christian patience* to be slavishly passive under the dominion of *sin*: Neither let us fight as one that beateth the air, only against vice in the abstract, in its universal nature harmless and inactive, and does us no mischief, but as it is incorporated, and dwels amongst us either in our selves, friends, neighbours or acquaintance, or as it is posselt of any stronger holds upon the earth, where borrowing strength from the places of its abode, and other unhappy circumstances; it not only enslaves its own immediate servants, those that it posselles; but reduces to bonds too, as many as are apt to be civil and favourable to the sin they hate, for the offenders sake whom they fear.

This is our *Christian warfare*, and as necessary and acceptable a part of our religious service, to be active and resolute in the suppression of sin, as earnest and devout in our addresses to God, or any other Christian duty, because here-
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in the honour of God is only vindicated, the violation of which, by any one sin, is a greater breach than can be possibly made up by any the best performances of our own. But under the pressure of our flesh we are able to do little towards this great work; Christ, as he is the *Author* of this freedom, so will he become, by the supplies of his Grace and Holy Spirit, a defender of our rights, if we fly to his assistance; *for we walk in the flesh, but we cannot war after the flesh, which sides with the adverse party, because the weapons of our warfare must not be carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of these strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth it self against the knowledg of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and then that freedom and happiness which we thus commence under many oppositions, shall be compleated and freed from all, when we are admitted into the liber-*

ties of that Jerusalem above, which is free, and the Mother of us all.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be ascrib'd, as is most due, all Power and Glory now and for ever.

F I N I S.

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